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ART & RECONCILIATION



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The Arts in Peace-building and Reconciliation: Mapping Practice.

Tiffany Fairey

SUMMARY

This working report summarises mapping research on the use of the arts in reconciliation and peace-building processes undertaken as part of the AHRC funded, *Art and Reconciliation: Conflict, Culture and Community*. It provides an overview of the expansive field of arts and peace-building, the key debates within the field and starts to map how we can differentiate between different forms of artistic peace-building practice. It is routed in a set of 14 project profiles that were developed to explore and demonstrate the diverse range of arts projects happening within peace-building contexts around the world and to provide examples of the different kinds of people, organisations and agendas that are driving how the arts are being used. Against this backdrop, this report draws on existing literature to summarise the key contributions of the arts to peace-building, the challenges they face and current thinking around best practice for arts practitioners.

Art & Reconciliation: Conflict, Culture and Community is a research project that seeks to address the pressing need to develop understandings of the applications and implications of the use of the arts specifically within reconciliation processes and to develop better evaluation methods that capture the contribution of the arts to reconciliation. The aim is to move beyond advocating the value and contribution of the arts and to develop a richer articulation of how the arts function within reconciliation processes (Shank & Schirch 2008).

AUTHOR

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Introduction

Art has always been used both as a weapon of war, to foment and sustain hate and violence, and to heal its wounds. This research focuses on the restorative and transformative potential of the arts to support conflict-affected communities to reconcile, to heal the past and to re-build a future.

The contemporary field of arts in peace-building is inextricably linked to the work of those socially and politically engaged artists dedicated to challenging the perpetrators of violence, to telling the stories of those who have suffered as a result of conflict and to imaging new futures. Independent and professional artists have always responded to and produced art about conflict and peace. However the last two to three decades have seen a more purposeful and strategic application and integration of the arts into peace-building work (Shane & Schirch 2008). It is this crossover realm that is the focus of this research: where artist's work and arts-based methods are strategically harnessed to pursue peace and support conflict-affected communities.

The arts have gain increasing attention as a 'soft power' strategy for conflict transformation. Advocates, such as the influential peace activist and scholar Jean Paul Lederach, allocate a role for the arts in peace-building frameworks. Lederach stresses that the orientation towards professionalization, technique and management in the field of conflict resolution has overshadowed, underestimated and often forgotten, the art of the creative process that is crucial to responding to deep-rooted conflict and building social change (2005).

The growing recognition of the central importance of identity politics and the need for an interdisciplinary approach has paved the way for psychosocial, artistic and cultural perspectives to complement mainstream institutional and structural approaches and legal, economic and political frameworks in peace-building. A recent report acknowledges that a focus on the arts as a lens through which to consider conflict and peace-building and to release bottom-up energy comes at a time when there is a wide crisis in faith in the elites and experts and their capacity to provide solutions (Salzburg Global / More Europe 2014).

There is a call for arts and culture to be 'mainstreamed' into peace-building activities¹. As interest grows, the field of arts and peace building is becoming gradually more formalised and an increasing volume of dedicated organisations, literature and research is emerging. Whilst under resourced arts-based approaches, methods and projects are increasingly securing funding and are being adopted by NGOs, institutions and community based organisations.

Despite increased attention, evidence of the impact of arts initiatives on reconciliation processes is fragmented and limited. The value of arts-based initiatives are yet to be fully realised (Hunter & Page 2014) with few projects surviving in the wild beyond evaluation stage (Bergh & Sloboha 2010). There is a gap between the reality of making art in sensitive and unstable conditions and the expectations and demands for developing robust evidence to inform policy-making and funding. A significant challenge is the tension between artistic approaches, rooted in creative collaboration, emotional engagement and dialogue, that are unpredictable, experimental and open-ended, and mechanistic, systematic approaches to project management and evaluation, rooted in pre-defined, linear frameworks, that are controlled, time-bounded and results focused. Research needs to navigate and work within this tension to build knowledge that can meaningfully inform future work that seeks to strategically harness the potential of the arts as a tool for reconciliation.

¹ <http://www.salzburgglobal.org/topics/article/culture-and-conflicts-the-case-of-ukraine.html>

Art & Reconciliation: Conflict, Culture and Community is a research project that seeks to address the pressing need to develop understandings of the applications and implications of the use of the arts specifically within reconciliation processes and to develop better evaluation methods that capture the contribution of the arts to reconciliation. The aim is to move beyond advocating the value and contribution of the arts and to develop a richer articulation of how the arts function within reconciliation processes (Shank & Schirch 2008).

This working report provides an overview of the expansive generic field of arts and peace-building, the key debates within the field and starts to map how we can differentiate between different forms of artistic peace-building practice. It is rooted in a set of 14 **project profiles**, presented in Part 1, that were developed to explore and demonstrate the diverse range of arts projects happening within peace-building contexts around the world and to provide examples of the different kinds of people, organisations and agendas that are driving how the arts are being used. Against this backdrop, Part 2 draws on existing literature to summarise the key contributions of the arts to peace-building, the challenges they face and current thinking around best practice for arts practitioners. The report concludes with some research questions to inform the next stage of a research process which more specifically considers the role of the arts in reconciliation processes.

Defining the arts

This document focuses on the arts as an expansive term that includes a wide range of cultural activity using artistic and creative methods and practices led by artists and cultural facilitators. The range of arts considered includes: festivals; musical and theatrical performances; exhibitions; arts and singing camps; singing groups, drumming circles and choirs; various forms of theatre (participatory theatre, playback and forum theatre); traditional and indigenous arts; painting and fine arts; quilting, sewing and textile art; murals and graffiti; sculpture; digital media and blogging projects; oral history and storytelling projects; photography; participatory arts projects; film-making; fiction writing; poetry workshops and events; youth arts projects; radical and resistance arts; therapeutic arts.

Methodology

This paper details findings and data gathered during an initial scoping study, literature review and case-study driven mapping exercise on the field of arts and peace-building conducted during February – April 2017 using systematic internet based searches, snowballing methods and sampling strategies. In addition interviews were carried out with 6 established arts practitioners. It has been compiled to inform the thinking and arts commissioning process taking place as part of the AHRC funded project: **Art & Reconciliation: Conflict, Culture and Community**. Alongside this working paper and its accompanying case-studies the author has created an online database with over 200 entries which includes resources, projects, literature and organisations and is available on Diijo (Arts And Reconciliation Group).

PART I

Overview of the arts and peace-building field

Historically, the first examples of arts projects that strategically sought to support reconciliation processes happened in Northern Ireland, where after the Good Friday Agreement in 1988 a considerable amount was invested into community theatre projects amongst other initiatives (Jennings & Baldmin 2010), and in South Africa, where numerous artistic projects took place alongside and after the Truth and Reconciliation Commission established in 1996. In the subsequent three decades the arts have played a role in post conflict reconciliation processes throughout Latin America, Africa, Asia and Europe and the Middle East.

The field of arts in peace-building is rapidly developing as dedicated practitioners have built up expertise, applying their methods and skills in multiple contexts, building up networks, sharing learning, securing institutional support, creating resources and undertaking research. Notable figures include Jane Taylor (South African playwright and academic) and Dr. Cynthia Cohen (2003, 2005, 2012) who leads the Acting Together research at Brandeis University; international NGOs Search for Common Ground and International Alert; dedicated arts organisations such as Culture + Conflict, In Place of War, Art As Foundation and Global Story Corps. In the last 2 years there have been a number of conferences and practitioner seminars and forums such as the Art in Conflict Practitioners Forum (Zurich, 2015), Cumbre Mundial de Arte y Cultura para la Paz (Bogota, Colombia 2015) and Conflict Transformation through Culture (Vienna, 2014; see Seidl-Fox & Sridhar 2014); KOFF Roundtable on Art and Peace-building (KOFF, 2017).

Notable recent literature includes a report on the contribution of art and culture to peace and reconciliation processes in Asia (Naidu-Silverman 2015) and a journal special edition on music and art in conflict transformation (Bergh & Sloboda 2010). One of the earliest bits of literature in the field was an edited volume (Liebmann 1996) which brought together practitioner essays, organised by art form, on artistic approaches to conflict transformation. Since, there have been a number of publications that focus on specific art forms such as music (Urbain 2008, Slachmuislder 2005) and theatre (Thompson et al 2009, Reich 2012, Cohen et al 2011, Rush and Simic 2014, Slachmuislder 2012). There is also literature that focuses on the use of arts in specific countries such as Canada (Robinson & Martin 2016), Cambodia (O'Keefe 2016), Ukraine (Salzburg Global Seminar 2014) and Bosnia (Zelizer 2003). A key point of note about writing and thinking in the field is that it is being driven by practitioners working with the performance arts (theatre and music) and as a result the practice-based literature is primarily focused on the performative rather than visual arts. Existing research and literature on the visual arts and photography tends to focus on role of images in building memory and the imaginary of conflict in pursuit of social justice.

Within the field, various frames and concepts are used to describe and give meaning to activities undertaken in diverse settings. These include the expansive term of arts and peace-building and in addition arts and reconciliation, arts and memory work, arts and conflict-transformation, arts and conflict and artistic activism. Each term puts a different emphasis on a specific aspect or way of framing the arts and their effects. At the same time all these terms share characteristics and in the literature are often used interchangeably without clear definition as to how they are distinct from each other or might be relevant or not relevant in different settings.

However on questioning, arts practitioners make clear distinctions between the different kinds of artistic work that happens in different kinds of contexts. These distinctions are not definitive but

recognise the different qualities, politics and artistic processes at stake in different applications and uses of the arts in conflict, post conflict and post atrocity settings. Arts work that seeks to record and remember the stories of the victims of violence is different to arts work that seeks to ease inter-ethnic tension and conflict. A children's music workshop is different to a professional theatre production. An arts initiative commissioned by a government led reconciliation commission is different to a community driven arts project. Taking the specific example of transitional justice settings, the arts can be used to contribute towards transitional justice initiatives such as Truth and Reconciliation Commissions and they can also play a role in providing a critique of the denialism and ideology of transitional justice in specific national projects (Rush & Simic 2014). As such the arts can both complement or challenge official, national or localised narratives.

Practitioners and organisers recognise that the arts and their application are not homogenous while at the same time often talking about and advocating for the arts in generic terms without making distinctions between different forms of artistic practice. For people external to the field, especially funders, institutions and professionals who do not have experience with the arts, this can be misleading. Thinking of the arts in generic terms results in the inappropriate use, mis-application and mis-direction of arts methods and projects. Context is crucial to arts work. There are many different ways of working with the arts, some of which are effective in certain contexts and not in others. In order to ensure arts work does not become marginalised or ineffective, there is a pressing need to provide frameworks that enable people to make distinctions between the different specific ways of doing arts work and that recognise the different agendas that inform different models of arts practice.

Project Profiles: differentiating between forms of artistic practice

This collection of 14 mini case-studies seeks to illustrate the plurality of the field of arts in peace-building: the diversity of art forms, ways they are being used, agendas, people and organisations involved in very different post conflict, reconciliation and peace-building contexts around the world. There are projects that are memory focused, others that are justice focused, some concentrated on conflict transformation and others on healing and psychosocial support. Given the expansive nature of the field this collection does not claim to be a definitive representation, rather it aims to demonstrate the spectrum of different modes of existing arts projects, initiatives and applications. In terms of geographical focus the project and organisations are skewed towards the Western Balkans which is the primary focus of the Art and Reconciliation research project. It is also important to recognise there is a huge wealth of small, under the radar, often localised arts projects which are not adequately represented here due to the limited nature of desk-based (rather than in the field) research. These projects often have limited international exposure or online presence. The selection of projects and organisations presented here are bias towards projects that have information available online.

Projects are shaped by number of elements that define the character of an intervention: its relevance; its level of visibility; the values that drive it. Isolating some of these characteristics can help to researchers to orientate projects within the wider spectrum of practice and distinguish between the qualities and values that drive arts in peace-building work. The following six point framework has been developed to help distinguish between different kinds of arts work

Who is leading the arts?

There are 3 broad overlapping categories of arts projects:

- **artist led:** there many different kinds of artists that bring different sets of dynamics to projects: international artists; exiled artists; locally based artists; amateur artists; community artists; youth artists
- **community driven:** Led by community members or community based artists
- **strategic artistic interventions** led by institutions, NGOs and arts organisations using arts-based methods and arts projects. These often involve working in collaboration with artists, arts facilitators and communities. Many projects involve a negotiated collaboration between different stakeholders- between artists, communities and institutions / NGOs / funders rather than having one clear party in the driving seat.

Who defines the agenda?

- What is the discursive frame, project motivation and agenda that drives the artistic production and process? Who is defining that agenda? Is it coming from the artist, from institutional partners or from the community? Is it an agenda that is imposed or self-generated? To what extent has it been pre-defined? Is it an agenda that has anything to do with peace and reconciliation? Has the community been asked about priorities and agendas and listened to?

What is the context?

- What is the socio-political circumstances in which a project takes place? The location, the localised politics and power structures, the social economic circumstances of the main people and communities involved, the structural and political issues they are confronting, community divisions, logistical circumstances etc

What is the art form and process / method used?

- Performative arts; visual arts; digital media; traditional arts; arts festival. The art form and / or the artistic approach/process and project model they employ – is the focus on the delivery of a high quality **artistic production** or experience (product) or on the quality of the **artistic process** and methods (process)? Is it art by professionals or is it participatory or collaborative arts that involves community members in artistic production? If they are involved, how are they involved? Who has devised and selected what is the relevant / appropriate art form or project model? Has the community been asked and listened to?

How is the project financed? And where is the money going?

- Some projects are voluntarily run by community leaders and volunteers; some artists refuse to accept any funding for their projects in a bid to keep their work independent. Other projects receive institutional funding, grants or private donations. Does a project have to be accountable to external funders? How much do funding agendas shape or frame a specific arts project? How is the money being spent? How much goes directly to community based resources and people and how much is spent on artist fees or professional production costs?

At what stage in a peace process / post conflict is the project happening?

- the distance in time from the conflict which the activity takes place -Dr James Thompson (in Seidl Fox 2014:10) emphasises the significance of the time/space continuum and of designing arts projects that are appropriate for specific points in that continuum as he argues that often the closer one is to conflict the less one is likely to want to speak about it

With these questions in mind, here are the project profiles:

Art as Foundation: Swiss Arts foundation that runs arts projects with international artists and local partners in the South Caucasus

ArtLords: a collective of street artists repurposing blast walls in Kabul, Afghanistan

Global Arts Corps: an international theatre company who have worked all over the world including South Africa, Northern Ireland and Cambodia.

In Place of War: Manchester university based support network for grassroots artists in conflict affected countries

Marcelo Brodsky: an Argentine artist and human rights activist whose photography and memory work has become central to the push for justice in confronting the abuses of Argentina's military dictatorship.

Minefield: collaborative documentary theatre by Argentine director Lola Arias and former Argentine and British soldiers who fought in the Falklands War.

Most Mira: participatory arts projects to build bridges with young people from divided communities in rural North West Bosnia

Nindibaajimamon: inter-generational digital storytelling projects with the children of residential school survivors in Canada

Opera Circus / music camps in Bosnia: musical theatre and music camps with young people in Bosnia

Post Conflict Research Centre: arts and media based projects dedicated to restoring a culture of peace in Western Balkans.

Search for Common Ground: international NGO pioneering participatory theatre for conflict transformation in various countries

The War Not Seen: art workshops and exhibition of paintings by former combatants from all sides of Colombia's internal conflict.

The Weavers of Mampujan: community textile arts project led by women from the displaced community of Mampujan in Colombia

Yuyanapaq: photographic project commissioned by the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission

PART II

What do the arts contribute to peace-building?

Much of the existing literature seeks to examine, advocate and illuminate the different ways the arts contributes to peace-building. Here these are summarised into **5 key themes: the arts as healing; the arts as remembering; the arts as a pursuit for truth and justice the arts as enabling dialogue; the arts as embedding peaceful values.** These themes are inter-linked and are not meant to be understood as discreet. Any particular arts initiative in any specific setting may harness the capacity of the arts to enable any number of these themes alongside each other.

Underpinning these themes are **two key cross-cutting qualities** that make the arts so valuable to peace-building work. Firstly **the arts engage**, they enable the participation of hard to reach groups, they are non-threatening and fun and draw people in, giving them a new means to take part. Arts engage at multi-levels: at the individual, community, national, societal and international level. Secondly, **the arts are transformative**: they can change how people look at themselves, their situations and at each other; they make meaning and give us new stories and ways to understand experience. The transformative impact of the arts is complex, unpredictable, non-linear and highly subjective making it hard to quantify.

I. Art as healing

Arts projects are often undertaken to support the victims, survivors and other individuals and communities affected by conflict or violence. The therapeutic value of the arts and their capacity to support processes that enable individuals and communities to make sense of what has happened, their emotions, to work through trauma, to find a form of peace and look forward is documented in fields the fields of art and music therapy (refs). People traumatised by abuse, violence or loss are often unable to verbalise or makes sense of their experiences. The unique capacity of the arts is to provide a 'neutral' safe space and a means to voice what is unsayable in words through other means – art, music or theatre. Arts interventions can use images, metaphor and sound to enable people to engage with painful and traumatic experiences. Practitioners need to be aware and experienced to ensure projects do not re-traumatise individuals and that appropriate support and networks are available to bolster arts activities. However increasing numbers of projects demonstrate how creative acts enable survivors and communities to make new meanings and create new languages to understand reality.

Therapeutic arts based interventions do not necessarily take the form of formalised art therapy but rather democratise therapy by supporting group and community healing processes and providing a form of creative form of communication to address silence and pain that cannot be spoken. Practitioners often refer to art as creating a 'safe' third space (Reich 2012). In addition arts provide opportunities for people to come together have fun, enjoy themselves, celebrate their cultures, build friendships and to connect and share with others – all activities that have significant therapeutic benefits for conflict affected communities.

Case Studies: Weavers of Mampujan; Nindibaajimamin; Opera Circus and Nigel Osbourne's music camps; The War Not Seen; In Place of War, Art as Foundation

2. Art as remembering

Arts projects in post conflict and atrocity affected societies are often immersed in processes of remembering as artists and arts initiatives serve to memorialise victims, uncover hidden (invisible) atrocities and human rights violations, process the past and recognise past and current suffering and wounds. Such art and memory work consists of bearing witness, documenting atrocities, collecting evidence and testimonies of what happened, remembering those who died, commemorating the pain borne by survivors and creating counter-narratives to the official or perpetrator-led histories. This concern with the past is motivated by a concern for the future and the resolve to effectively communicate and commemorate the past to ensure perpetrators are brought to account for atrocities and to ensure the past is not repeated. It is often undertaken alongside the rallying cry of 'Never Again'.

Other forms of process-based and dialogical arts-based memory work create spaces for people to process and explore contested memories; enable communities to forgive; bring together the memories of people from opposing sides of a conflict and support 2nd and 3rd generations of survivors to understand the past and its bearing on the present.

Case-studies: Marcelo Brodsky; Yuyanapaq; Minefield; PCRC; The War Not Seen, Global Arts Corps; Nindibaajimomin; The Weavers of Mampujan.

3. Art as a pursuit for truth and justice

Arts projects that pursue justice and truth use the arts as a means to confront and de-stabilise power and to campaign to bring people to account. They constitute arts as a form of activism and truth-seeking. Often tied to processes of remembering victims and to human rights movements these projects harness the communicatory power of the arts to build up an audience and draw attention to abuses and atrocities to ensure that perpetrators and those in positions of power are brought to justice. This concern with truth can form part of a nationally-sanctioned truth-seeking process such as a Truth or Reconciliation Commission or can act as a counter to national narratives and official histories. This type of arts work can often sit uncomfortably alongside arts work that is reconciliation focused which often involves suspending demands for justice and a focus on dialogue.

Case-studies: Marcelo Brodsky; ArtLords; Yuyanapaq

4. Art as dialogue

Art projects that pursue dialogue acknowledge the existence of multiple truths (rather than advocating a singular truth) and seek to enable a dialogue between these different truths. The arts provide many kinds of encounters, spaces and processes that create opportunities and safe parameters in which people can come together to reflect on their own positions and assumptions and actively engage with the positions and positions of others. Dialogue is understood as integral part of reconciliation and conflict transformation processes. Many projects that seek to harness the dialogical power of the arts seek to strategically enable reconciliation and conflict transformation. They may seek to build empathy for the 'other' by enabling identification with different groups, break down stereotypes and mis-information about other groups and counter divisive narratives, media and hate-speech.

Often community based and utilising participatory and collaborative techniques these projects are process focused. They can take various forms; such as a creative process that brings groups from opposing sides of a conflict together to collaborate on producing an artistic output such as a play; or a creative process that enables conflict affected communities to safely explore, reflect on and debate

conflicts within their own communities. They aim to build trust and facilitate the re-building of relationships. Collaborative work that allows for dialogue involves interaction, joint problem solving and meaning making that can enable people to connect with each other. Arts practitioners working within reconciliation frameworks emphasise that pushing groups to reconcile before they are ready by delivering arts projects explicitly focused on reconciliation or on bringing opposing groups together before they are able to engage with each other can be counter-productive. It also needs to be understood that dialogical processes do not necessarily seek to resolve conflict or find a consensus between opposing groups rather the focus is on enabling a critical engagement with the other.

Case-studies: Art As Foundation, Global Arts Corps, Minefield, Most Mira, Nindibaajimamin, Opera Circus, PCRC, Search for Common Ground, The War Not Seen, The Weavers of Mampujan

5. Arts as embedding peaceful values

Arts-based strategies are also used as part of longer-term peace-building and reconciliation efforts that seek to build and embed tolerance, celebrate and enable diversity, inclusion, human rights and democratic values and build community relations to prevent hate, tensions and conflict resurfacing. The arts and culture play an important role in supporting individuals and society to imagine a new future and to create shared understandings, identities and values. This kind of arts work is future looking and focused on the long-term re-building after conflict and atrocity with the aim of sustaining peace and enabling democratic values. It is often integrated within development strategies and delivered by partners and artists who have a long-term stake in the targeted communities. Projects can take on many different forms such as arts events or festivals, arts integrated into long-term peace education or community based initiatives and youth arts projects.

Case-studies: ArtLords; Art As Foundation; Most Mira; Opera Circus and music camps; PCRC; The Weavers of Mampujan, In Place of War, Art As Foundation

Challenges facing the arts

Key challenges link back to the tension between artistic and institutional approaches to peace-building. They coalesce around evidence of the impact of the arts on peace-building and reconciliation and the question of how their impact can be measured. Artistic practitioners often struggle to do bottom up arts work within top down approaches in post conflict settings which can be in constant flux. They want to define, understand and capture the value of their work through open-ended and emergent frames while official mechanisms based on linear and mechanistic models of change seek to pre-define, and find definitive evidence of, impact. The issues faced by arts in peace-building mirror debates in the field of social-engaged arts more broadly where there have been long-standing critical debates around how the value and social impact of the arts can be quantified (Belfiore & Bennett 2007; Matarosso 1997). These issues can be summarized as coalescing around 5 key points.

Weak evidence: historically advocates have tended to romanticise and be over optimistic about the effects of arts work in post conflict societies. Statements about the transformative power and significance of the arts have been made without qualification or clarification. The parameters of success are often set by organisers which leads to an exaggeration of the role of the arts that does not necessarily match participant's experiences and neither can it be backed up by supporting evidence. For many the existing evidence base is weak, with research largely centred on interviews with artists and organisers who tend to report success (Bergh & Sloboha 2010). There has been a reliance on

anecdotal evidence and descriptive case-studies rather than rigorous or systematic research and evaluation. However advances are being made. Professor Nigel Thompson has successfully collaborated with scientific researchers to build an evidence base for the impact of music on trauma affected children and adults (Osbourne 2012) and NGOs such as Search for Common Ground are building a considerable body of research and evidence around participatory theatre as a tool for conflict resolution (Herrington 2016, Slachmuis 2012).

Failures in current arts evaluation:

Practitioners have highlighted numerous concerns with current institutional led arts evaluation including the onerous and burdensome administrative and form-filling focus that occurs at the expense of artistic activity (Jenning and Baldwin 2010). The time and effort involved rarely results in useful information. There is a strong disincentive for organisations to report honesty on difficulties and undesirable impacts and little opportunity to capture unexpected outcomes, side effects, long term impact or the value of small but significant benefits. There is a lack of reflexivity about power issues and how these shape the dynamics of arts interventions when NGOs or visiting artists bring resources and opportunities to communities struggling to recover from conflict. Current evaluations appear more geared to claiming success than actually understanding the processes and effects of projects and questions of what happened, what worked and what didn't. Practitioners report that they often conduct two forms of evaluation which involve different methods, capture and forms of knowledge – one aimed at generating the kind of 'evidence' of success required by institutional funders and that will support future funding bids and another which seeks to capture the kind of critical practice-based learning which builds organisational and artist's knowledge and informs future projects.

Lack of support and awareness from donors

Arts-based initiatives struggle to secure significant institutional funding as donors continue to view the arts as a side line activity to the real work of peace-building. Institutional funders often fund large-scale programmes making their funds challenging to access for small scale cultural operators (see More Europe report 2014). Arts projects are often volunteer led and localised or are funded on a project to project or piecemeal basis which hinders the development of strategic long-term projects and the integration of arts activities and methods into wider holistic programming. On the flip side when institutional funders do support arts projects they are often experienced by communities as 'imposed' rather than as having been developed in response to a community identified need. Local communities can find it insulting when external artists are sent in with fixed ideas of the projects that they want to do with communities.

Problematic assumptions about the arts

The power and the potential of the arts are often romanticised in a way that assumes that they have an inherently positive effect on peace and reconciliation. However misguided arts projects can (unintentionally) serve to increase rather than reduce difference. For example, by embedding the paralysing effects of perpetrator and victim narratives that sustain division or by trying to replicate an initiative that worked well in one context but does not translate to another time and place. Arts initiatives can do harm as well as good especially when working with vulnerable groups and with inexperienced or unsupported practitioners. It must not be assumed that the arts create universal languages and that simply co-producing artistic or cultural endeavors will bring people together.

Short-termism

Most arts initiatives are short-term but for the arts to reach its full potential as a peace-building tool there is a need for long-term commitment. Relying on short-term, immediate impact and emotional reactions to aesthetic and creative experiences to demonstrate value can be counter-productive. There is a lack of evidence and research to establish whether short-term arts interventions enable

long term or enduring change but practitioners argue that long-term activities maximise the impact and benefits of arts projects. NGOs such as Search for Common Ground have demonstrated successful results from embedding arts approaches into wider long-term programmes that are sustained over years.

There is an assumption that the arts facilitates the relationship building understood to be at the core of reconciliation and conflict transformation but there is challenge to building lasting relationships when many arts activities consist of short-term interventions by outside organisations. Arts organisations such as Art As Foundation and Opera Circus UK chose to work with the same local partners and in the same communities repeatedly returning, building on project, their understanding of the local need and context and building relationships with local leaders and people to ensure their maximise the capacity of their projects to have a lasting impact.

Best practice and learning

Best practice advocates argue that a balance needs to be found between non-prescriptive artistic ways that are open-ended and do not limit creativity and institutional ways that involve strategic planning, systematic thinking and the need for evidence of impact. There is a culture shift required from both sides – for artists to find new ways to describe and quantify their work and for non-artists to appreciate what the arts have to offer on their own terms. Existing literature and ideas around best practice highlight a number of key themes:

Arts interventions need to be strategically managed

Arts work, which is often under-funded, fragmented and delivered by resource poor practitioners, can lack strategy. Practitioners are increasingly recognising the importance of strategically managing the arts to maximise their impact. This involves the effective design, planning and monitoring and evaluation of projects and integrates modes of strategic and analytical thinking alongside creative and artistic approaches that locate the arts work in terms of the social change impact it is aiming to have. Strategic thinking around the arts focuses practitioners on the questions of ‘what’, ‘when’ and ‘how’: what the arts are contributing, when and why different art forms and models of practice are relevant, how they are or aren’t working, what they achieve. Strategic approaches build critical knowledge and learning enabling artists and organisations to improve and refine their work, to replicate and re-apply their ideas and approaches. (Naidu-Silverman 2015, Shank & Schirch 2008)

Arts interventions as multi-disciplinary and partnership based

Practitioners recognise art and culture as being part of a range of solutions and as one strategy within the peace-building tool kit. It is when artists work in collaboration with others – youth workers, community leaders, educators, NGOs, peace activists, human rights groups, academics and institutions – that skills can combine, complement each other and impact can be maximised. Artists and arts organisations ordinarily work in partnerships with others – human rights groups, community organisations, schools – but the quality of those partnerships are central to the impact and relevance of what is achieved. The arts can bring new insights and approaches to other disciplines and modes of working while collaborations between the arts and universities and researchers can ensure learning about the arts is optimised and people trained in the theory of peace-building can critically re-frame artistic processes in the light of the knowledge they bring from peace and conflict research.

Long-term interventions maximise impact potential

Arts practitioners are increasingly wary of short-term projects where outside artists temporarily insert themselves within a community to (co) produce art work around an issue. Questions hang over whether this represents the best use of resources and whether such interventions consist of any meaningful sustainable impact, involvement or engagement for the communities. In short, there is the question of who benefits more from such interventions – the artist or the community? When reconciliation is recognised to be an ongoing process rather than a single moment then there is strong argument that the most effective use of the arts is through sustained interventions or initiatives that think strategically about their temporal impact within ongoing processes. When arts organisations are locally based and work over time within a community they are able to build and sustain relationships, they understand the context and need, they are able to listen to communities and ensure the relevance of their activities. Whilst the disruptive value of short-term arts interventions is not to be underestimated (when outside artistic players enter a community and act as a catalyst for change) learning generated from arts research highlights that the impact of short-term interventions is limited in terms of how they support sustainable reconciliation on the ground.

Projects need to be context-specific, relevant and non-prescriptive

Practitioners highlight the importance of making and designing arts projects to be context specific. This entails understanding the issues, needs and concerns from the perspective of the community and listening to people before imposing ideas of what kinds of art and approach may work. While artists and organisations come armed with their own specific sets of skills, preferences and ideas these need to be sensitively adapted and made relevant to the contexts in which they are working to generate a trust and enable meaningful engagement. While funders always seek replicable project models, practitioners such as Global Story Corps highlight that techniques that worked for them in South Africa did not work in Northern Ireland and emphasise the need for artists to master the art of listening to communities to ensure their work is relevant and appropriate (Seidl-Fox & Sridhar 2014:14). Projects cannot be prescriptive and follow formulaic designs. They need to listen because in one community it might be important to remember and in another it might be more important to dance and forget. The arts are flexible and can be used to meet multiple needs. They can be used to deal with pain but also to look beyond it.

Context is everything. Context sensitivity is vital to ensure artists do not walk blindly into projects that end up doing more to harm or divide than reconcile communities. Each context is complex and involves plural layers specific to that place and time and the arts need to be cognizant of complexity. Emphasising context also recognises that preconditions are necessary to realise visions for arts and culture to contribute to peace and reconciliation efforts. Successful arts projects often build on the tendencies of local art forms or revive art traditions to address contemporary issues of intolerance (Naidu-Silverman 2015).

CONCLUSION

This mapping report has sought to provide a generic overview of arts and peace-building, a field which is expansive, plural and multi-faceted. It has provided a framework which researchers can use to locate and differentiate between different kinds of artistic practice and forms and sought to illustrate the diversity of the field through a range of project profiles. Artistic work involves, collaboration, engagement and communication. It can help us to understand each other, build relationships, share experience, imagine, to remember and to forget but its transformational, peace-building capacity cannot be assumed. It is a mistake to think that art and culture are naturally aligned with reconciliation and peace-building efforts. The task now is to more carefully identify when and how the arts concretely contribute to peace-building and reconciliation.

The next stage of the research needs to move away from generic frames and to better understand the specific ways that the arts work in specific contexts. How can arts be useful at different stages in peace-building processes? What are the dynamics and appropriateness of specific art forms? Research to date has been very much focused on the performative arts (music and theatre) and there is a distinct lack of information and resources pertaining to the visual arts within peace-building.

Focusing on reconciliation; what is the specific contribution that the arts can make to reconciliation? What kinds of arts projects hinder reconciliation and what kind of projects support reconciliation? There is gap in knowledge to fully grasp the complex relationship between art, culture, conflict and peace and to understand how the arts can contribute to reconciliation processes and how can their success be enhanced and measured.

Conversations with arts practitioners reveal that reconciliation is largely perceived and experienced as a something that is imposed from above and as a result is actively rejected or designated as deeply problematic. What can looking at arts and reconciliation work tell us about who is defining reconciliation and how it is experienced by people in peace-building settings? How can we use the arts as a lens to understand and negotiate the unresolved relationships between reconciliation and justice and between remembering and forgetting?



Art As Foundation

Various countries

Mixed Arts

The Swiss Foundation for Art in Regions of Conflict is an independent arts foundation that started in 2011. Based in Switzerland and working with international artists and local partners, the foundation initiates its own art projects and supports their delivery while studying the contributions unrestricted art can offer to conflict mediation and the building of peace. They divide their projects into 3 types: Art and Reconstruction; Art and Mediation; Research and Networking. Geographically, much of their projects are focused on the South Caucasus¹.

Projects include the annual Tskaltubo arts festival (running since 2013 and now being locally managed). Tskaltubo is a formerly famous Soviet thermal resort in Georgia that hosts 4500 IDPs of Adkhaz origin who have been living in precarious circumstances in former sanatoriums for 25 years. Another project is Art Camps, collaborative arts workshops between students in the Zurich University of the Arts and Tbilisi State Academy of the Arts in Georgia that has run in 2012, 2014 and 2015. Other one-off interventions include the Complaints Choir that saw Finnish artists Tellervo Kalleinen and Oliver Kochta work with Georgian villagers and the refugee population living near Gori, Georgia. 'Bring Your Own Chair' was a collaboration with a Georgian NGO which saw a series of open-air cinema screening around the town of Zugdidi.

Art as Foundation argue art offers a specific way of relating to the world that creates new perspectives by providing a space beyond everyday concerns and stimulating discussion without letting anyone have the last word. It emphasises that in order for art to develop its potential, *"It must not be subordinated to any fixed goals or purposes—no matter how good the intentions might be. It needs spaces of trust in which to play, without guaranteed outcomes or proven effects"*².

Dagmar Reichert, the director, describes how they conduct evaluations on all of their projects but avoid institutional forms of monitoring and evaluation which they have found generate limited learning; participants often telling them what they think they want to hear rather than what they actually think. When possible they invite other independent arts practitioners to observe and document their projects as a form of independent evaluation³. Reichert recognises that they are in a unique position because they are answerable to individual donors with whom they have direct relations (as opposed to institutional funders) and this allows them a freedom to learn for learning sake as opposed to evaluating to demonstrate their value.

Art as Foundation is committed to research and learning in the field. In May 2015 they hosted the Practitioners Forum on Art and Conflict⁴ and they have developed an advanced studies programme with the Zurich University of the Arts on Art and International Cooperation.

“ *For me in an arts project it is important that answers are not given, it should give people the stimulation to think, remind people of the complexity of a situation. Art should work against simplification and giving black and white explanations*

Dagmar Reichert, Art As Foundation Director⁵ ”

References

¹ For further information see Art as Foundation website:

<http://www.artasfoundation.ch/en>

² See the Art as Foundation's Points of Departure on their website :

<http://www.artasfoundation.ch/en/points-of-departure>

³ Dagmar Reichert was interviewed for this research, April 2017.

⁴ See <http://www.artasfoundation.ch/forumartinconflict/>

⁵ Quote taken from April 2017 interview with Dagmar Reichert for this research



Image courtesy of Art Lords website

ArtLords

Afghanistan

Street and Mural Art

Established in 2015, ArtLords are a group of Afghan artists and activists using street art to promote messages of hope and peace. The lack of security in Kabul has led to the erection of many defensive blast walls, especially around high profile buildings, transforming the feel of the city. ArtLords want to reclaim these spaces and transform the negative psychological impact of blast walls on the people of Kabul into 'positive visual experiences'. They aim to create strategic pieces of street art to educate and communicate messages to the public, harnessing the soft power of art and its non-intrusive approach 'to pave the way for social transformation and behavioral change'¹.

They started with an award-winning series of anti-corruption murals on prominent blast walls near government ministries². The paintings of eyes, accompanied by the slogan, 'I See You', were designed as a warning to corrupt officials. In another series, 'Heroes of My City', they sought to celebrate everyday heroes such as municipal workers, teachers and nurses. The aim was to create an alternative narrative to warrior and fighter heroes who are traditionally celebrated in Afghan culture³. In another series they sought to counter the culture of violence and war by painting pictures centred on hearts, representing the love that Afghans have for their country. Through their strategically placed pieces of street art they look to engage and educate Kabul's citizens on issues such as women's rights. One mural they put up on a blast wall near the area in Kabul where an Afghan women was fatally lynched by a group of men after being falsely accused of burning the Koran. The slogan beneath the pictures says, 'A brave man supports women'.

Graffiti is rare in Kabul so the street art has generated significant attention. ArtLords conduct the mural painting process specifically to ensure the painting become opportunities for open-air public art workshops as passers-by are invited to join in and contribute to the paintings. The art is purposefully drawn using a simple paint-by numbers design to enable anyone to be able to participate in the painting.

Led by its co-founders Omaid Sharifi and Kabir Mokamel, ArtLords does not accept government money⁴. They want to retain ownership of their work while acting 'as a platform that allows for the use of the arts for specific tasks that measurably contribute to consent building on any given subject and that contributes to the positive transformation of society'⁵. They aim to promote critical thinking, transform the face of Kabul, introduce creative methods to affect behavioral change, to create a youth movement to hold the authorities accountable and address the culture of corruption and to use art to solve conflict, build trust and foster understanding based on knowing the other.



“ Our government, international organisations, and all of Afghanistan’s powerful people have made themselves safe inside these blast walls. Ordinary citizens, meanwhile, walk around the streets and see these ugly walls everywhere, walls that don’t protect them. For us, Kabul looks like a prison. So we decided we could at least put some colours on these walls, and at the same time, try to get some messages across.⁶

Art Lords Co Founder, Kabir Mokamel

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¹ Quotes taken from Art Lords website: <http://artlords.club/>

² 2016 news article: <http://bakhtarnews.com.af/eng/culture/item/26502-art-lords-wins-anti-corruption-innovation-award.html>

³ 2015 Al-Jazeera piece and article: <http://www.aljazeera.com/blogs/asia/2015/08/afghan-graffiti-artist-strives-beautify-kabul-150826090658859.html>

⁴ See 2017 research interview with Omaid Sharifi: <http://www.jgu.edu.in/researchcentre/centre-for-afghanistan-studies/pdf/Art-Lords-Interview.pdf>

⁵ See Art Lords website: <http://artlords.club/>

⁶ Quote taken from interview: <http://observers.france24.com/en/20150903-kabul-afghanistan-art-lords-murals-graffiti>



Images courtesy of Global Arts Corps website

Global Arts Corp

Multiple countries

Theatre and Circus

Global Arts Corps is an international group of professional artists who use the transformative power of theatre to bring together people from opposite sides of violent conflict, unrest and war. Their productions draw together performers and audiences from different parts of countries' cultural, religious and racial divides to create dialogue and a space for people to hear the stories of people they have learnt to hate, distrust or fear. **Their productions from South Africa and Cambodia have toured in 17 countries and reached over 90,000 audience members and 12,000 through reconciliation workshops¹.**

It was started in 2005 when the American theatre directors Micheal and Jackie Lessac travelled to South Africa to develop theatre and film projects with South African artists that explored their struggles for justice and celebrated the possibility for change. The South African production, *Truth in Translation*, told the story of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission through the eyes of the Commission's young interpreters. Over two and a half years, *Truth in Translation* toured to 24 post-conflict areas around the world, posing the question Nelson Mandela asked of his country, **"Can we forgive the past to survive the future?"²**. **Subsequent productions include Hold Your Tongue, Hold Your Dead which brought together republican and loyalist actors in Northern Ireland and See You Yesterday which worked with 2nd generation genocide survivors in Cambodia, young circus performers who wanted to explode the traumatic legacy of silence in their country.** The cast of *See You Yesterday* travelled to Kigeme refugee camp, Southern Rwanda, and played to audiences of over 5000 Congolese refugees. Documentaries films of the plays and their tours provide additional insight into the complex and challenging processes the performers go through and have been screened at film festivals and events worldwide.

Global Arts Corps' work is grounded in the partnerships they build with artists, local NGOs leaders, educators and young activists in their production's home countries and the locations to which they tour. They have created a team and a network of associate artists and aim to grow and sustain an international community of artists, a 'go-to resource' for collaboration with peoples emerging out of violent conflict. They strive to ensure that their audiences extend beyond the normal theatre going public and by creating films of the development of each production they extend their audience further.

Global Arts Corps describes the stage as a 'laboratory for conflict preservation and reconciliation'³. Acknowledging that conflicts are on-going even when peace has been declared and that hatreds need to be understood in order to prevent recurring cycles of violence, they advocate theatre as a tool because of the centrality of listening to an actors' craft.



“

In rehearsal, nothing can be swept under the rug, nothing can be denied, and everything must be on the table. The actors do not need to agree, but each must be able to rehearse something he or she does not believe; each must be willing to adopt an identity and explore it before accepting or denying it.... The productions that emerge from this process, forged out of the performers' memories, multiple truths, and conflicting narratives, are necessarily messy. Yet, within this messiness we find substance and sustenance, a core of vital meaning that we otherwise may never have discovered.

Global Arts Corps website⁴

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References

¹ Figures taken from Global Arts Corps website: <http://globalartscorps.org/home/>

² See short film Global Arts Corps: The first 5 years: <http://globalartscorps.org/home/>

³ See <http://globalartscorps.org/home/what-we-do/at-a-glance/>

⁴ Quote taken from <http://globalartscorps.org/home/what-we-do/at-a-glance/>



Images courtesy of In Place of War website

In Place of War

Various countries

Mixed Arts (music focus)

Based out of Manchester University, In Place of War, started life as an AHRC funded research project led by James Thompson (now Professor of Applied and Social Theatre) that set out to investigate the work of artists living in war zones. The main research question was to look at what (performative) arts work was happening in war zones, at how those artists defined and understood their work and the agendas they pursued with their artistic work¹. The focus was on locally based artists who were producing work within conflict and conflicted affected places rather than artists producing work about conflict. The main research output was the book, *Performance in Place of War* (2009)².

Since its research project roots, In Place Of War (IPOW) has evolved into an activist arts organisation headed up by Ruth Daniels (Professor Thompson now sits on the board). IPOW aims to create a support system for community artistic, creative and cultural organisations in places of conflict, revolution and areas suffering the consequences of conflict³. Working through and with a network of 100 grassroots community organisations in Africa, the Middle East and Asia, In Place Of War provides resources, training and co-ordination to needs identified by those on the ground. Working with artists they produce music and music performances and festivals as well as tours and cultural exchanges for musicians⁴.

They are involved in 5 different kinds of activities⁵:

- 1) Training, capacity building and skills development: ie. Creative Entrepreneurial Programme and training trainers programmes; online resource platform in English / Arabic
- 2) Creating and resourcing community cultural spaces in Egypt, Uganda and Palestine
- 3) Research, policy and advocacy: ie. Power of Hip Hop exchange; 2016 academic conference in London
- 4) Creative production and content production: ie. producing music CDs and videos
- 5) Networking and exchanges between grassroots artists: ie. Voices of the Revolution, music collaboration with 15 female artists from sites of conflict, 3 weeks in the UK, performed at 3 UK festivals; collaborative album with UK and Zimbabwe hip hop artists

Funded through grants and donations in the UK, In Place of War is made up of a small team. Their aim is to support artists and creative communities to thrive in their different dynamic responses to the challenges they face. They claim their work is unique because they listen to people on the ground, something that many international agencies fail to do.

In Place of War believe that it is local creative organisations that are best placed to appreciate the complex historical, political, social and cultural dynamics unique to their situation and who know best how to reach their community. For this reason they work to enhance existing locally driven projects through partnerships with grassroots organisations who have a genuine long term commitment to improve their neighborhoods.



“ *There is a real tendency to impose the demand that people remember and produce projects that deal with themes relating to the war and conflict whereas often if you ask communities they say no – we want to have a party, we want to do something that helps us to forget about the war, that has nothing to do with it. A big part of our work is those moments when people are using the arts but not to remember.*

Professor James Thompson⁶ ”

References

¹ Interview conducted with Professor James Thompson for this research, April 2017. See also Professor James Thompson’s lecture for the Annual Cockburn Rutherford lecture, Manchester University, June 11th 2013: <https://inplaceofwar.net/our-work/research/>

² Thompson, J, J Hughes, and M Balfour. 2009. *Performance In Place of War*. Seagull Books.

³ See In Place of War website: <https://inplaceofwar.net/>

⁴ See In Place of War’s youtube channel and vimeo tagged films to get a sense of their activities: <https://vimeo.com/tag:in+place+of+war>
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChDZDaRRauhFkOnBifLtC-w>

⁵ See In Place of War’s 2016 Annual Report
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B44PI0fAykQ5LTU5clVzeUlsS0hIRnJ1RzMyWUIGRVdST2E4/view>

⁶ Excerpt from research interview with Professor James Thompson, April 2017



Marcelo Brodsky

Argentina

Visual Arts

Marcelo Brodsky (b.1954) is an Argentine photographer, artist and human rights activist whose brother was one of the 'disappeared' during Argentina's repressive military dictatorship that ran from 1976-1983. His photographic work, that mixes notions of personal and collective memory and is framed by trauma, has become seminal in Argentina's artistic response to the dictatorship. Brodsky is an active campaigner within the Argentine human rights movement and worldwide.

Brodsky is perhaps most famous for his project, Buena Memoria (1997), which is based on a 1967 graduation class photograph of students at the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires, the annotations to the image tracing what became of them. Many of the students disappeared because of their political involvement, including Brodsky's brother. Conceptualised as a non-linear visual narrative, specific chapters of Buena Memoria use old family photos to tell the stories of his friend Martin and his brother Fernando while another chapter, Memory Bridge, documents a 1996 ceremony at the Colegio Nacional de Buenos Aires in memory of the school's 98 disappeared. The final chapter focuses on the Rio de la Plata where many of the disappeared were thrown to their deaths by the military. At the time of its publication there was limited public recognition of the abuses committed by the military regime. Buena Memoria used still images to reinstate the 'disappeared' in the collective memory of Argentina. A second project and book, Nexa (2001) continued his exploration of memory and repression through the lens of his experiences in exile. Brodsky lived in Spain over the years of the dictatorship but returned to Argentina soon after and has lived and worked there since.

Brodsky is an active figure within the Argentine human rights movement that seeks to uncover the abuses committed by the military dictatorship against its people, to bring those responsible to justice and to reunite the children of detained activists born in captivity and placed with military families with their birth families. He is a member of the Asociación Buena Memoria and sits on the board of Directors of the Parque de la Memoria, a sculpture park built in Buenos Aires to the memory of the victims of state terrorism which includes a large monument with all the victim's names and an art gallery. His photographic work is recognised internationally and is held by major collections in the UK, USA, Europe and in Latin America. In 2014 he also founded Visual Action, an NGO dedicated to visual activism in human rights campaigns and education.

Brodsky has actively engaged with international networks around memory work, exchanging with South African and other international artists. However he distinguishes his work and the movement he has been a part of in Argentina from other contexts that have adopted the concept of reconciliation. In his mind the notion of reconciliation prevents the application of justice for perpetrators and enables a culture of immunity. He is wary of any strategy that comes to supersede justice and prevents justice from being achieved, once justice can be applied only then can reconciliation happen. For Brodsky, in Argentina where it was the case of the state violently suppressing its own people, justice must prevail to ensure that history is never repeated and that incidents of state repression do not continue. He believes his work as an artist is to enable people to connect emotionally to what happened; to narrate to younger generations the abuses that took place during the military dictatorship and to demand for justice.



Marcelo Brodsky in his studio in Buenos Aires

“

When it comes to state violence the state has to be held to account... Memory and its relation to what is happening now is central to this. Reconciliation can come once the violence has been eradicated. My work is about remembering not about reconciliation. It is about ensuring it never happens again.

Marcelo Brodsky¹ ”

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Artists website: <http://marcelobrodsky.com>

Arruti, Nerea 2007 *Tracing the Past: Marcelo Brodsky's Photography as Memory Art* Paragraph 30:1 p101-120

¹ Marcelo Brodsky was interviewed for this research, May 2017



Minefield Argentina and UK Theatre

Directed by the celebrated Argentine theatre director Lola Arias, Minefield is a collaboratively created documentary theatre piece that brought together British and Argentine veterans of the Falkland Islands/Islas Malvinas war to share their first-hand experience of the conflict and life since. Co-commissioned by LIFT (London International Festival of Theatre) the project brought together 6 veterans who fought each other to be both the co-creators and performers of the play¹.

"Some of them got medals, and some were forgotten. Some of them continue in the forces and others started new lives as psychologists, musicians, teachers, security guards. Today the only thing they have in common is that they are all veterans. Digging deep into the personal impact of war, MINEFIELD is a collaboratively created new work that merges theatre and film to explore the minefield of memory, where truth and fiction collide." Taken from Minefield promotional literature²

While both the Argentine and British governments continue to take strong positions on the sovereignty of the Falklands / Malvinas the play recognises that many of the people who went to fight were not there for personal ideological reasons but to do a job for their country. While there was no overt reconciliation agenda with the play, Arias's aim was to get beyond the 'recited' version of history and explore personal memories and experiences of the war.

The collaborative process involved a constant back and forth between Arias and the veterans whom also kept diaries charting their thoughts and feelings about revisiting the past. Arias created texts from what they told her which she gave to them to decide what was included and what is not. The veterans were able to change their minds at any point, including while it was being performed. Arias views authorship as a shared responsibility and process that everyone (her and the veterans) is all involved in³.

Minefield toured the UK and Argentina to wide acclaim in 2016⁴ and continues to tour internationally. A book is also now available from Oberon Books (2017)⁵.



“ What you discover is how far the past and present co-exist in all our lives and how much what once happened to us has an influence on who and what we are now. Whether we acknowledge it or not. This play is like a time machine. We see these men as they are now in their 50s and we also catch a glimpse of their younger selves, those young men in their late teens and early 20s who went to war.

Lola Arias interviewed in The Guardian May 2016⁶

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References

¹ See Minefield trailer: <https://vimeo.com/155732707>

² Quoted from promotional material: <https://royalcourttheatre.com/whats-on/minefield/>

³ see account in Guardian article: <https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2016/may/26/minefield-falklands-theatre-veterans-battle>

⁴ See press portfolio on Minefield:
<http://lolaarias.com/wp-content/uploads/2017/01/MINEFIELD-press-jan17.pdf>

⁵ See <http://lolaarias.com/proyectos/minefield-campo-minado/>

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Image courtesy of the Most Mira website of Most Mira's proposed Peace Centre

Most Mira

Bosnia and Herzegovina

Mixed Arts

Most Mira (Bridge of Peace) was founded in 2008 'to build a better, more peaceful future for the young people of Prijedor and the surrounding areas' by 'bringing young people to make friends across ethnicities and celebrate diversity'¹. Kemal Pervanic, one of Most Mira's founding trustees, was born in Prijedor which was amongst the most severely affected regions during the Bosnian war. A survivor of the notorious Omarska concentration camp he came to the UK as a refugee and has since dedicated his work to reconciliation and peace-building². Pervanic believes that the new generations of Bosnians who have nothing to do with the war are its greatest victims because their parents, teachers and community leaders are transferring the legacy of previous wars to them. He wanted to do something to help young people to 'escape from this trap'³. Although not from an arts background Pervanic saw that the arts provided a safe, common and neutral space for people from all sides to come together, to push boundaries and create something unrelated to conflict.

In its first three years Most Mira ran a week long annual arts festival for 300-450 children from all ethnic backgrounds from 4 segregated schools and 2 youth groups. The festival was coordinated and run by a large group of local and international volunteers and artists who ran participatory workshops in art, drama, dance, music, circus skills, photography and media. Since 2012, they have worked with school children on drama projects lasting 6-9 months that culminate in performances in the local theatre and in each other's schools. In the last couple of years, leadership and democracy workshops and training have also been run for young people in Prijedor. Most Mira have been invited to establish a permanent Peace Centre in Kevljani and an architecture workshop resulted in a design that received planning approval in March 2016. Funds are now being raised to build the Centre.

When Most Mira was first established, Pervanic describes that there was a lot of resistance from the communities but that he was lucky that two teachers from the key schools were supportive. These teachers were crucial to making the project happen. 'I never said (to them) it was about reconciliation but they both understood that it was'. He avoided using the word reconciliation, which is a highly politicised term in the communities where Most Mira works. "It was too sensitive to talk about making peace and reconciling. People were so badly conditioned that they felt safer in their own group. Trying to reach out to people from another group involved a lot of hostility... People are afraid of making peace".

In this highly divisive and politicised environment Most Mira make sure that their activities are dissociated from politics. The focus on artistic expression enables children to build friendships and trust across ethnicities.

Participatory approaches and learning are central to Most Mira's approach and stand in direct contrast to the rigid, traditional education models used in most Bosnian classrooms. International volunteers (many from the UK) have also been important to Most Mira's activities. The trustees argue that volunteers bring new ideas and energy and are not restricted or burdened by local politics. They point out many participate because of the novelty of the international volunteers. They draw people in who might otherwise have stayed at home and push them beyond their comfort zone and to try something new⁴.

Over the years Pervanic has seen many positive changes, 'Ten years ago you wouldn't have seen people from the community come together to watch a performance in the same theatre. Now they are there together and they get on really well with each other'. He highlights various ripple effects attributable to Most Mira's work: a number of young people going on to work in the arts and other small localised arts and youth initiatives springing up. At the same time he stresses how tough the work is. When funders ask him how he will know if their work will make a difference he wants to answer, 'I don't know. I will know in 10 or 15 years time'. However most funders are not willing to wait that long. With an emphasis on short-term results and immediate solutions, Most Mira have found that long term community based, participatory arts work is not of interest to the majority funders.

" You can start this process (of reconciliation) and you can run it successfully without talking about it, without using this specific term. You can talk about it using other words. Some people have been able to see this kind of participatory arts work is crucial if we want to grow a long-term peace.

Kemal Pervanic, founding trustee, Most Mira⁵

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¹ Kemal Pervanic wrote a book about his experience during the war, *The Killing Days: My journey through the Bosnian War* (1999)

¹ These quotes are taken from an interview with Kemal Pervanic carried out for this research, 29th December 2017

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¹ Quote taken from interview with Kemal Pervanic undertaken for this research, 29th December 2017.



Images courtesy of Nindibaajimomin website

Nindibaajimomin

Canada

Digital Storytelling

Nindibaajimomin is an inter-generational digital storytelling project on the legacy of residential schools in Canada¹. Taking place between 2010-2014 in Winnipeg it consisted of four digital storytelling projects with 32 residential school survivors and the children of residential school survivors. Organised by the Oral History Centre and the Department for Indigenous Studies at the University of Winnipeg, the project involved 4 rounds of 5 days of workshops in which participants were guided through 'an intense and deeply emotional process of remembering family histories and experiences, storytelling, and the creation of a personal digital story, using digital media software'².

A total of 24 digital stories were made available publically online and at event screenings. The project team also produced five guides which make up a digital storytelling toolkit for practitioners which is available online³.

Nindibaajimomin was funded by The Aboriginal Healing Foundation, an Aboriginal-managed organisation that supported healing initiatives that addressed the legacy of physical and sexual abuse suffered in Canada's Indian Residential School System. It was financed by the Canadian government as part of Canada's Aboriginal Action Plan.

The project is illustrative of arts based interventions that bring together distinct stakeholders and agendas – government, aboriginal leaders and participants and academic researchers and practitioners. It sought to engage both privately and publicly with the legacy of the residential schools on the children and grandchildren of survivors. An emphasis was placed on creating a private and supportive process and space for the digital storytelling participants to explore their history and the affect of the abuse their parents and grandparents suffered in residential school system on their lives. Those participants were then able to choose whether they wanted to share those stories publically.

The project aimed to help survivors in ‘telling the truth of their experiences and being heard’ while also working to engage Canadians in a healing process ‘by encouraging them to walk with us on the path of reconciliation’⁴. The participant testimonies attest to the therapeutic and healing impact of the digital storytelling process. One described how it made her feel less alone as the ‘process of listening to and sharing each other’s painful, touching and emotional life experiences ultimately’⁵.

“Life is about stories... we have learned that a story can change a life. They help us remember and as we have seen from the research on intergenerational experiences, they help us to heal from wounds we often do not even know we have.”

Nindibaajinomin Final Project report (2014:58)⁶

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⁴ Quote taken from project website: <http://nindibaajimomin.com/the-project/>

⁵ See Marlyn Bennett’s testimony: <http://nindibaajimomin.com/stories/marlyn-bennett/>
Also:

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⁶ 2014 *Nindibaajinomin: Children on Survivors: The Intergenerational Experiences of the Children of Residential School Survivors* Aboriginal Healing Foundation ISBN 978-1-77215-000-1. Available here: <http://nindibaajimomin.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/03/nindibaajimomin-REPORT-WEB.pdf>



© Robert Golden, courtesy of Opera Circus website

Opera Circus and Summer Music Camps Western Balkans Theatre and Music

Professor Nigel Osborne, an acclaimed British composer, who got to know Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) as a young man returned repeatedly to Sarajevo while it was under siege during the Bosnian War to work with musician friends and to bring music to children suffering from the trauma of the continually bombardment and death. These informal workshops evolved into the establishment of the Pavarotti Music Centre¹ in Mostar with the NGO War Child that offered a range of music therapy and therapeutic music activities to treat the effects of trauma in children.

Through this work in BiH, Nigel Osborne has spearheaded work with music therapy in post conflict settings working closely with scientists to evaluate and measure its impact alleviating the physiological effects of trauma on children. He emphasises that peer-reviewed scientific trauma research now clearly demonstrates that music therapy can help with the symptoms of trauma rather than heal it completely². His ongoing work with communities affected by conflict uses music not only as a form of therapy but also as a tool for social change with communities composing their own songs as a means to getting their voices heard. His work in BiH and Croatia continues with summer music camps documented in the film, *A Gift of Culture*³, by filmmaker Robert Golden who has extensively documented the work of Nigel Osborne and Tina Ellen Lee at Opera Circus.

Nigel Osborne collaborated with Opera Circus⁴, a performing arts company headed by Tina Ellen Lee, to write the music for an opera, *Differences in Demolition*⁵, (text was written by the Bosnian poet, Goran Simic). In 2007 this production toured throughout BiH and Opera Circus were invited to Srebrenica to meet a group of young people who had set up Srebrenica Children's Music Theatre, leading workshops and creating performances with and for children in the town. Srebrenica Children's Music Theatre is made up of Serb, Croat and Bosniak young people working together to make music and theatre⁶. They wanted more training and experience in choreography and dance, drama, music and stage and lighting skills and they wanted good news to come out of Srebrenica.

This led to an ongoing relationship with Opera Circus UK responding to the evident desire of the young people to use artistic and cultural practice to create opportunities in their town. Various different projects and initiatives have taken place over the years. These included performance programmes and youth and school exchanges between Srebrenica and the UK, youth centre job sharing programmes, dance courses, festivals, support for University and college scholarships and mentoring. Ongoing workshops have included Parkour, Forum Theatre, the uses of Music for those with physical or emotional concerns and live performance⁷. Currently their work is mainly focused on The Complete Freedom of Truth⁸ project, an international youth-led project aimed at building global youth citizenship through arts and culture and the Four Towns Youth Initiative that brings together young people from four towns in BiH.

Robert Golden's film, *Candles in the Night*, shot between 2009-11 documents the young people's efforts to overcome the horror of the past and the divisions of the present in their community. The whole film has not been broadcast as it is still considered too dangerous for the young people however this extract was edited for DAVOS in 2012 and presented by Professor Nigel Osborne, as part of a seminar on Music for Social Change⁹.

Tina Ellen Lee has contributed to various seminar and forums on arts, culture and conflict¹⁰ (Seidl-Fox 2014, Salzburg Global Seminar 2014) and stresses there are no quick fixes to re-building people and no large-scale solutions. Highlighting how local people usually feel offended and estranged by foreign experts who arrive with ready solutions, she advocates for continuous engagement on the ground and consistent work to build and sustain safe creative spaces that encourage the sharing ideas and concerns over time¹¹. She has been working with UNICEF and Bournemouth University to develop evaluation and research¹².

The work of Nigel Osborne and Tina Ellen Lee with Opera Circus UK are considered together because of their shared focus of working with young people, music and theatre in BiH and also because together the overlaps and collaborations in their work illustrate an important element of the collaborative and emergent qualities of artistic initiatives. The long term, interlinked evolution of their work demonstrates how artistic projects grow out of and engender collaboration between different groups and individuals (artists, community groups and institutions) and can evolve and adapt in response to what is happening on the ground. Artists who work with a long-term commitment to a specific country, region or community often build complex networks and spheres of knowledge founded on collaborative endeavor that builds the capacity of local actors.

“

I think that with the development of the theatre its clear that the Srebrenican children aren't burdened by war memories and are inspired to do new things so the children create a new situation ...

quote from a young person who is a member of Srebrenica Children's Music Theatre, taken from the 2012 film *Candles in the Night*¹³

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- ⁴ See Opera Circus UK's website: <http://www.operacircusuk.com/>
- ⁵ A short film about Differences in Demolition: <https://vimeo.com/40072619>
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- ¹¹ Tina Ellen Lee was interviewed for this research, April 2017
- ¹² An evaluation report from a UNICEF funded project is available here: Lee, Tina Ellen 2014 Music and Art workshops in the Birac region. Unicef. Available here: https://www.scribd.com/doc/251451843/unicef-music-project-web-site?secret_password=ubTqRp9VNUGSEyG2G3y#from_embed
- ¹³ Robert Golden's 2012, *Candles in the Night* Special Davos edit: <https://vimeo.com/38859759>



Images courtesy of PCRC website: *One Billion Bones, the road to Srebrenica.*

Post Conflict Research Centre

Western Balkans

Multi-media; photography and film

The Post Conflict Research Centre based in Sarajevo, is dedicated 'to restoring a culture of peace and preventing conflict in the Western Balkans' through creative multi-media projects. Using photography, film and developing innovative media and arts based peace education programmes, PCRC's work targets public and youth audiences and seeks 'to propel dialogue, transform public opinion, elevate underrepresented voices, and inspire hope, intercultural understanding, and cooperation'¹.

Founded by Velma Šarić and Leslie Woodward in 2011, PCRC engage in research, consultancy and transitional justice activities alongside their visual media and peace-building programmes. Arguing that 'creative multimedia has the power to serve as a pathway for building peace' and 'reinforce critical inquiry' in the peace-building process¹, PCRC produces and curates films and exhibitions alongside which they developed peace-building education programmes and workshops. Šarić notes the failure of mainstream media in BiH, the 'role of the media should be as a tool of reconciliation but we have a completely biased, manipulated media'¹. She argues that more traditional forms of engagement in post conflict society are no longer effective,

'We really need to be creative and inventive to even get young people together in the same room. What has been proved in 15 years of work was that if you use art and social activities as a reason to bring young people together it is much easier than if you do a workshop about dealing with the past. They are so overloaded with the war context, and in a country with the biggest unemployment rate in Europe and all these issues, it is really hard to just bring them together.' (Šarić, interview 2017)

With much of their work being youth focused, Šarić sees film and photography as a way to re-humanise the 'other', a 'way of telling stories that young people can directly empathise with and see other people's lives' and a way of creating a permanent record that can be accessed in the future (Šarić, interview 2017). Using a socially engaged, multi-media production process that is 'collaborative and co-operative, Šarić describes how PCRC 'consider the process as important as the product as it entails building relationships based on trust, while the product aims to activate the audiences exposed'.

The *Ordinary Heroes Peacebuilding Program*⁵ is one of PCRC's flagship initiatives that utilises stories of rescue and moral courage to promote tolerance, reconciliation and inter-ethnic co-operation. It provides a good example of how the organisation builds multi-faceted media educational projects out of the photography and films they produce. The *Ordinary Heroes* documentary series¹ features 4 stories of

Bosnian citizens who at a risk to themselves and their loved ones chose to rescue an 'other', someone from a different ethnic group, a friend, neighbour and sometimes a stranger, during the Bosnian war. *The Rescuers*⁶ is a photographic exhibition that brings together portraits and stories of 'ordinary heroes' from 4 different countries facing conflict and genocide. The *Ordinary Heroes Peacebuilding Program* used these documentaries and photographic exhibition as the basis for a reconciliation-focused participatory education workshop focused on rescuer's stories and the notion of moral courage. PCRC have conducted these workshops with over 1000 youth in municipalities all over BiH. The linked *Srđan Aleksić Youth Competition*, running for the last 2 years, encourages young people to discover, collect and share stories of peace-building, moral courage and inter-ethnic cooperation from their communities. The aim is to 'inspire Bosnian youth by encouraging them to take an active role in the promotion of positive examples of Bosnian citizens who are making a difference in the lives of others'⁷.

Another project is *My Body: A War Zone*, a photographic exhibition that documents the use of sexual violence as a weapon of war through the testimonies of women survivors from around the world. The transitional justice academic Olivera Simic writing about the exhibition describes how 'these acts of acknowledgement are an important part of transformative reparation' (Simic 2016:25).

*Balkan Diskurs*⁸ was initiated in response to the lack of transparent and accurate media with the aim of establishing a unique pan-ethnic media outlet and platform for Bosnian youth and PCRC's international volunteers. Committed to challenging stereotypes and providing diverse viewpoints the online platform publishes a wide range of articles by young writers covering contemporary issues and sharing ideas on how BiH can achieve positive social change in various sectors.

Šarić emphasises that PCRC's work is about 'working with youth to reconcile the histories that have been passed on to them and to avoid that history being repeated'. Dealing with the past 'behind closed doors' does not work anymore, she insists (Šarić, interview 2017). However PCRC is careful about the language they use to articulate their perspective, Šarić notes that they try to avoid the term 'reconciliation' preferring to use language such as 'interethnic co-operation, understanding, tolerance building, mutual understanding, dialogue, and empathy building'. They also steer clear of framing their work in the context of forgiveness, although they do note that 'we do measure that with youth after the workshops they are much more susceptible to accepting the other'.

“ It is obvious that during the war, the siege, art was a symbol of resistance, now it is a good reason to bring people together... it helps them think outside the box.

Velma Šarić, PCRC president, interview 2017

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- ⁸ <https://balkandiskurs.com/en/>



Images courtesy of Search for Common Ground website

Search for Common Ground

Rwanda / South Sudan/ Democratic Republic of Congo and others
Participatory Theatre

Search for Common Ground is an international NGO that uses innovative tools to end violent conflict around the world. Working in over 30 countries with local partners and networks on conflict transformation they work at all levels of society to build sustainable peace through three avenues: dialogue, media and community. Taking a holistic approach they work with diverse groups including artists but also youth, media professionals, the military and police, politicians, religious leaders, prisoners and women to tackle a range of issues that relate to peace-building including natural resource conflict, violent extremism, reconciliation, disarmament and reintegration, gender equality, democracy and elections, to name a few¹.

Search for Common Ground have made extensive use of the arts in their work, particularly of participatory theatre for conflict transformation², principally in Africa, in countries including Rwanda, South Sudan, Central African Republic, DRC and Burundi. Search for Common Ground's work exemplifies an approach that applies and uses arts based approaches within a broader strategic programme, where the arts-based work is one strategy that is integrated within a portfolio of approaches and a wider programme utilising other tools such as radio and media projects and inter-youth conferences and debates. See summaries of Search's work in Niger³ or Rwanda⁴ for examples of this integrated approach.

Participatory theatre for social change involves actors going into a community and speaking with them, collecting their stories and listening to their problems, and then putting them into a form of drama where their stories, and the conflicts they entail, are presented back to the community. The actors encourage people to think and look at conflict with different options of response and non-violent response, to find solutions themselves. Audience members are invited to participate in the performance, to act out possible solutions or scenarios and to adapt or challenge situations. Performances are followed by discussions where the audience members talk about the issues raised. Search for Common Ground work with local actors who are given specialist training and support to develop participatory theatre performances and workshops. Participatory theatre, in its different forms that include playback theatre and forum theatre, has an established history within community development settings, a developed literature, body of research and theoretical grounding⁵. Search for Common Ground have used this body of knowledge to develop their own specific form of participatory theatre for conflict transformation to use within their own peace-building programmes. Films made about their work in the Democratic Republic of Congo⁶ and South Sudan⁷ provide an insight into the different ways participatory theatre is applied in their work.

Search for Common Ground's use of arts based methods is noteworthy for a few reasons. Firstly because they use the arts as one strategy within a portfolio of approaches that support peacebuilding at multiple levels and in different spheres. Secondly they work long term in regions so arts projects are not only

integrated into broader peace-building programmes but are delivered over longer time frames. Thirdly Search is one of the leaders of learning and evaluation in the peace-building field, spearheading the DME for Peace network⁸. They have extensively documented their programmes as well as conducting evaluation on their participatory theatre programs and producing resources for practitioners wanting to work with and evaluate participatory theatre^{9/10}.

Evaluation findings have included:

- In the DRC, participatory theatre involving military men and their wives proved to be a particularly effective way to train soldiers to not be sexual predators. A study of their work in DRC showed that 78% of audience members said that they had learned a great deal about how to deal non-violently with conflict.
- In Rwanda follow up studies with audience members showed they had not only gained knowledge and skills but that they could cite specific examples of how they applied this new knowledge to their own lives. They reported changes in behaviour among leaders toward citizens, reciprocal changes in citizens' attitudes toward local leaders, and resolution of personal conflicts. In addition, the trained actors were empowered as social communicators and expanded their skills to successfully manage conflict¹¹.



References

¹ See Search For Common Ground's website for a full account of their work:

<https://www.sfcg.org/what-we-do/>

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³ See <https://www.sfcg.org/niger-elections-2016/>

⁴ See <https://www.sfcg.org/promoting-collaborative-land-conflict-transformation/>

⁵ See for example

⁶ Search for Common Ground's work in Democratic Republic of Congo:

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The War We Have Not Seen

Colombia

Painting

Led by Colombian writer and artist, Juan Manuel Echavarria, this project saw 35 ex-combatants participate in art workshops that culminated a collaborative exhibition of their paintings entitled “The War We Have Not Seen” at Bogota's Museum of Modern Art in 2009¹. The ex-combatants were former soldiers from paramilitary and guerrilla organisations and the National Army representing the different factions of Colombia's war. The art workshops ran over 2 years. They painted about their personal experiences and their art illustrated the violence, forced displacement, drug trafficking and plundering of the land that has taken place over the years of Colombia's war.

Much of the project process is described in various essays on the project website¹ Echavarria worked in partnership with NGOs and government run projects to find workshop participants. There were separate workshops for each different group of former combatants with all their paintings coming together in the final exhibition. Echavarria, with 2 other artists, ran workshops in hostels in Bogota for former paramilitary combatants from all over the country demobilised under the 2005 Justice and Peace Law. He then went on to meet former guerrilla members who were participating in a City program for ex-combatants who deserted from guerrilla groups. Finally he found demobilised soldiers from the Colombian Army by running workshops through the army hospital in Bogota with wounded soldiers. He wanted to involve female combatants for all sides but was only to make contact with guerrilla female ex-combatants. The focus was on file and rank soldiers in order to explore how the war was understood and experienced by those that fought and to generate stories that might counter the narratives of war ideologists.

Echavarria is an established artist and has produced much of his own artistic work on the Colombian conflict². He was able to use his own cultural capital to secure funding and institutional support for the project which was financed through grants and corporate sponsorship. The exhibition was first shown in Bogota but went on to other Colombian cities and to the States and Europe.

The workshops were voluntary and by the end of 2 years there were 420 paintings by 120 artists. 90 of these were selected to make up the final exhibition. Painting was not taught, materials were supplied. The proposed method was that they painted on 50x30cm wooden boards. The former soldiers were asked to paint about their memories and experiences but were free to paint how and what they wanted.

Echavarria explains how there was a process in place to establish trust between the participants which involved a lot of talking and listening and it was only with this that many of the stories surfaced.

Everyone received as many boards as they wanted so they could put their stories together as if they were working with the pieces of a puzzle. The professional artists spoke with the participants about how important it was for the country to see the truth from within, to try to understand how these events were happening and why they continue to happen³. Workshop participants were keen to have their paintings seen publically. The project did have a significant therapeutic value for the participants but this was not the main objective. Rather the project sought to build historical memory and understanding through art, supporting ex-combatants to process what cannot be made sense of through words.

“ *Our interest was to get to know what lay behind each one of their stories and to try and understand what made them get involved in the war. Painting was the means which allowed them to depict the war horrors. For me these paintings were a way to gain more knowledge on the conflict: They revealed many untold stories of the war, and the unimaginable horrors that so many Colombians have never acknowledged.*

*Echavarria in interview⁴,
http://www.laguerraquenosvisto.com/english/ensayo_tiscornia-echavarria.html*

”

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¹ See Echavarria's website for details of his work: <http://www.jmechavarria.com/>

¹ Quote taken from *Taking the War Out Of Abstraction; A Conversation Ana Tiscornia – Juan Manuel Echavarria*. Available here: http://www.laguerraquenosvisto.com/english/ensayo_tiscornia-echavarria.html



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The Weavers of Mampuján

Colombia

Sewing and textile arts

The Women Weavers of Dreams and Flavours of Peace of Mampuján¹ are a group of displaced women from the community of Mampuján in the Montes de Maria region of Colombia which was destroyed as a result of the conflict in Colombia in March 2002. In 2006 the women started to meet together to sow tapestries. They began when Juana Alicia Ruíz Hernández, an Afro-Colombian community leader who had been working with church organisers, began advocating for more psychosocial projects to support the community. At her insistence an American, Teresa Geiser, was invited to Mampuján to run a workshop on trauma healing. She introduced the women to quilting as a method to support community healing and resilience².

The women started to meet regularly to sow. Drawing on Afro-Caribbean storytelling and local textile art traditions, instead of creating quilts, they sewed their stories, creating large tapestries that depicted the atrocities they had suffered as a community and documented their displacement. Each figure that they cut and sewed represented someone from their community. The women credit the process with being central to their process of healing and re-building, enabling them to come together and to share their pain, to commemorate and to start looking forward³. Juana recalls how they cried and sewed and how gradually the crying changed to laughing, “it was a way to recover from trauma, a strategy to narrate and tell what had happened, to sit and to talk,” Juana remembers⁴. Through these conversations, the women decided to sew the history of their people, from life in Africa, to slavery, to agriculture, in a series of tapestries. Through this process, Juana says, they learnt about the cyclical character of violence and they committed themselves to breaking the cycle.

In 2008 the community of Mampuján was chosen to attend the first court hearings under the Justice and Peace Law of 2005, as part of the demobilization process. In return for a lighter sentence the commanders behind the displacement of Mampuján confessed to their crimes. In a historic court ruling, the Colombian state was ordered to pay reparations to the victims of Mampuján (2010). During one televised hearing, Juana’s husband, Alexander Villarey Pulido, publicly forgave the commanders. Watching the live stream from the community Juana feared the reaction of the people who had lost everything to these men but Alexander was given a standing ovation when he finished speaking. A Canadian project volunteer notes that the community were able to publicly forgive and to look forward as a result of a social healing process that had included community organising and the social healing of tapestry making that had started years before the formal transitional proceedings⁵. The reparation process has not been smooth. Village leaders and organisers have worked hard to support the community, to defend their rights, to pursue the reparations they were promised and to achieve real healing. While going through the transitional justice proceedings the women met less regularly to sew but their tapestries continued to play a role as central back drops to meetings, gatherings and their activism.

In 2014, one of Mampuján's tapestries, *Travesty*, was put on permanent display in the National Museum in Bogota to highlight the unique contribution of Afro-descendant communities to Colombia. It depicts the story of their ancestors' journey from Africa to Colombia, in the hold of a slave ship. A video accompanying the quilt depicts the women sewing while narrating their current situation. In 2015, the Weavers of Mampuján were awarded the Premio Nacional de la Paz, a leading peace prize in Colombia. With the prize money they are building a network to support more women like themselves to engage in sewing and community healing and organising projects⁶.

The Weavers of Mampuján is an example of a local, grassroots driven arts project where a community, building on their own storytelling and textile traditions, have repurposed an arts method to create a space and means for them to move from individual healing to a collective recovery that has facilitated wider processes of reconciliation. The creation of the tapestries involved a collaborative and social healing process that built the capacity of the community to engage with government sanctioned transitional justice proceedings. The tapestries themselves have become backdrops to organising and have made the community and their history visible in national and institutional forums. This project demonstrates the evolving role of the arts as an ongoing process (as opposed to singular interventions) that can support reparation and reconciliation processes over time, not necessarily only by bringing people from different sides of the conflict together but by also building the capacity and resilience of a community to deal with state-sanctioned reconciliation processes.

“ I always say that if the tapestries could speak they would tell you how many tears had fallen on them ... with every stitch we made we felt it made a difference in our heart.

Alexandra Valdez⁷

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- ³ See the testimonies given by the women in *Tejedoras de Mampuján* (2015), documentary by Margarita Martínez commissioned by Reconciliation Colombia and the Premio Nacional de Paz <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owAj-XxbXhk>
- ⁴ Quote from article from Article in The City Paper, February 24th 2015 <http://thecitypaperbogota.com/features/quilts-of-hope76778/8413>
- ⁵ Anna Vogt, a Canadian volunteer working with the Mennonite Central Committee, was involved supporting the quilting project and lived in Mampuján, for two years as the village went through reparation proceedings. This observation is made in blog post posted on August 22nd 2014 : <https://thellamadiaries.com/2014/08/22/impunity-and-forgiveness/>
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- ⁷ Quote from interview with Alexandra Valdez taken from *Tejedoras de Mampujan* (2015), documentary by Margarita Martínez commissioned by Reconciliation Colombia and the Premio Nacional de Paz (minute 8.14) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=owAj-XxbXhk>

The account provided in this profile was drawn from various sources, articles and films. These include those already listed in the numbered references and the following:

Mampujan: Historias de Dolor Tejidas por la Esperanza y el Perdon (2016), independent documentary (English subtitles) done in collaboration with the community in Mampujan by a research team including Juana Alicia Ruiz, Ruth Maria Romero Sanchez, Anadelfi Ladeus Teheran and Isaias Guerrero Cabrera: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kTsgFkVz0FI>

Las Tejedoras de Mampujan (2015), Vice Media (Spanish language) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QmWE7Glebug> (Part1) https://www.vice.com/es_co/article/wd3a5z/pacifista-presenta-las-tejedoras-de-mampujn-parte-2 (Part 2)



Yuyanapaq exhibition catalogue cover
A woman holds a photograph of a family member who vanished from the province of Ayacucho. © Vera Lentz

Yuyanapaq

Peru

Photography

Yuyanapaq was a transmedia photography project commissioned by Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission that aimed to build collective memory in the aftermath of Peru's internal conflict through an online photographic archive, a photography book, a large permanent photo exhibition and multiple travelling exhibitions¹. In Quechua (Peru's predominant indigenous language), Yuyanapaq, means 'to remember'. Yuyanapaq was led by the photographers, Mayu Mohanna and Nancy Chappell, who curated a selection of images from more than 90 archives covering the armed conflict from 1980-2000, among them those of private collections, the press, news agencies, the Armed Forces and Police, human rights institutions, community photography projects, the Church and family photo albums.

The Yuyanapaq images were intended to intervene in and build a visual narrative, national consciousness and shared memory. The organisers sought to use images to evoke the kind of emotional response that the Commission's written report could not do on its own, especially for those Peruvian audiences unaffected directly by the suffering and pain generated by the conflict and unlikely to read the 5000 page report². Salomón Lerner Febres, the philosophy professor who was President of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission described the images as giving 'us an urgent mandate: to ensure that the past is never forgotten, either on purpose or through indifference'³.

The Lima exhibition was popular and critically acclaimed⁴, responses were overwhelming positive (Saona 2009)⁵. It attracted high visitor numbers and considerable media coverage. It was credited with transforming critical and negative media coverage of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and paving the way for the positive reception of the Commission's final report and its message (Hoecker 2007)⁶. However some indigenous communities affected by the conflict were less enthusiastic and some did not want to the photographs displayed in their communities⁷. In Ayachucho, one of the regions most affected by the conflict, the exhibition was poorly attended and some visitors to the Lima exhibition questioned the apparent 'truths' offered in the photographs (Poole and Perez 2010)⁸.

The Yuyanapaq exhibition is on permanent show in Lima's Museo de la Nacion until 2026.

“ By showing these images... The Commission is also offering all Peruvians the visual evidence of a history that we must not only understand, but also identify as our own. Only then can we build a more peaceful and humane country.

Salomón Lerner Febres, President of Peru's Truth and Reconciliation Commission⁹

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¹ The online archive brought together over 1700 images that are available to search through the Truth and Reconciliation website here:

http://www2.memoriaparalosderechoshumanos.pe/apublicas/galeria/list_categorias.php. The main Yuyanapaq exhibition was in Lima in 2003 and featured over 200 images. Smaller exhibitions were shown in provincial towns throughout Peru and travelled overseas. The Yuyanapaq book included 80 images from the exhibition.

² Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación, 2004. Informe Final de la Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación. CVR, Lima, Peru. Available at: <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/ifinal/index.php>

³ Lerner Febres, S., 2003. Inauguración de la Exposición Fotográfica Yuyanapaq. Palabras del Presidente de la CVR [WWW Document]. Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación. URL <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/apublicas/p-fotografico/index.php> (accessed 5.7.13).

⁴ See the New York Times press article, June 27th, 2004 :

http://www.nytimes.com/2004/06/27/world/peru-photo-exhibit-captures-pathos-of-20-years-of-war.html?_r=0.

⁵ Saona, M., 2009. The Knowledge that Comes from Seeing: Yuyanapaq and the Peruvian Truth and Reconciliation Commission. *Hispanic Issues* 4, 210–233.

⁶ Hoecker, R., 2007. The role of photography in Peru's truth and reconciliation process (Master thesis). University of Missouri-Colombia, USA.

⁷ See <http://www.soros.org/events/recording-truth>

⁸ Poole, D., Perez, I.R., 2010. Memories of Reconciliation: Photography and Memory in Postwar Peru. Hemispheric Institute E-Misferica 7.2. Available at: <http://hemisphericinstitute.org/hemi/en/e-misferica-72/poolerojas>.

⁹ Full speech can be found here: Lerner Febres, S., 2003. Inauguración de la Exposición Fotográfica Yuyanapaq. Palabras del Presidente de la CVR [WWW Document]. Comisión de la Verdad y Reconciliación. URL <http://www.cverdad.org.pe/ingles/apublicas/p-fotografico/index.php> (accessed 5.7.13).

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